



MICHIGAN ADOPTION DAY

Giving thanks for families

Tuesday, November 23, 2004

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Second Michigan "Adoption Day" will be November 23 Michigan Celebrates Adoption Month

November 15, 2004

Michigan will hold its second annual Adoption Day Tuesday, Nov. 23 with a theme of "Giving Thanks for Families." The event is sponsored by the Michigan Family Independence Agency and the Michigan Supreme Court.

With collaboration from local FIA offices and private adoption agencies, more than 40 counties in Michigan will finalize the adoptions of more than 250 children that day. Additional celebrations and informational seminars for adoptive families will take place following the court hearings.

Michigan has been recognized as a leader for its innovative approach to adoption and our high number of adoptive placements. Along with the celebration of Adoption Day, Governor Jennifer M. Granholm has proclaimed that November is Adoption Month.

"Adoption is one of our most important connections between families, government, the courts and children," said Gov. Jennifer M. Granholm. "Adoption Day celebrates the success of connecting children from broken homes with new loving families."

Forty-two participating counties will finalize adoptions on Adoption Day, while additional counties will hold informational open houses where FIA offices and their courts will provide handouts and other information to people interested in the adoption process.

"Adoption Day is one of the single most enjoyable days for young children and adults alike in Michigan," said FIA director Marianne Udow. "This event has truly showcased the importance and the benefits of adoption for thousands of children." FIA staff and private agencies under contract to the state helped place 2,611 children in loving adoptive homes in fiscal year 2003.

Michigan Chief Justice Maura D. Corrigan said that this year's event will focus not only on adoption but also on alternative ways to help foster children.

"Last year our primary aim was to inform the public about the adoption process and about all the children in our state who want and need permanent loving homes," said Corrigan. "But we realize that there are many people of goodwill who, for various reasons, are not able to adopt a child. Our message to those people is there are other ways they can support foster children, particularly youths who are going to age out of the foster care system. On November 23, the Court will unveil a plan for connecting private goodwill to foster children's needs."

FIA strives to reunite children with their birth parents but in some cases this is not possible. At the end of 2003 there were approximately 6,200 children in the FIA foster care program who had their parents' rights terminated. Therefore, pursuing adoption is viewed as the best route to providing a child with a permanent loving home.

There are 4,184 state wards with a goal of adoption. Many of these children will be adopted by their relatives or foster parents. However, according to the Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange (MARE), 300 children are currently available for adoption and are looking for an adoptive family. FIA is actively recruiting adoptive homes for these children. Anyone interested in adoption may contact MARE at (800) 589-6273 or on the Web at www.mare.org.

Michigan's event will help celebrate National Adoption Month in November – where November 20 has been designated National Adoption Day. Although a number of other states are participating in National Adoption Day activities, national organizers say for the second year in a row that the Michigan event appears to be the largest statewide event in the country.

Attached is a list of participating counties.

- To acquire an updated list of courts participating in Michigan Adoption Day go to this Web site: www.courts.michigan.gov/supremecourt/press/MichiganAdoptionDayIndex.htm
- For more information on children awaiting adoption go to www.mare.org
- For more information on public adoption policies and data go to www.michigan.gov/fia and click on "Adoption".
- For more information on National Adoption Day go to www.nationaladoptionday.org

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Participating counties:

Alcona
Arenac
Calhoun
Cheboygan
Genesee
Hillsdale
Iosco
Jackson
Livingston
Mecosta
Muskegon
Oscoda
Saginaw
St. Joseph
Wayne

Allegan
Bay
Cass
Clinton
Grand Traverse
Houghton
Iron
Kalamazoo
Mackinac
Midland
Newaygo
Otsego
Shiawassee
Tuscola

Alpena
Berrien
Charlevoix
Eaton
Gratiot
Ingham
Isabella
Lenawee
Macomb
Monroe
Oakland
Ottawa
St. Clair
Washtenaw